

Ainu-e

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF JAPAN'S OTHER PEOPLE

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There is a commonly held misconception in the West that the people of Japan are of one culture, a perfect example of human homogeneity. This belief is more than an observation by Westerners: it has been the official position of the Japanese government for almost 150 years.³ However, there is one recently-recognized indigenous people,² the Ainu.³

Long an enigma to all manner of disciplines, such as physical and social anthropology, linguistics, ethnology, and archaeology, the Ainu have fascinated scholars and laypersons alike (Fitzhugh and Dubreuil 1999).⁴ To early Western visitors to Japan, the Ainu were the most exotic people of the North Pacific rim: their language is an isolate, and their physical appearance dramatically different from the Japanese or any of its neighbors. Their abundant body hair and long-flowing beards, rugged muscular bodies, deep-set eyes, and other features led Western researchers to believe the Ainu were “an island of Caucasoids in a sea of Mongoloids” (Harrison 1954: 278–93). As we see in **Figure 1**, the misconception, based on appearance, was entirely understandable. This 1871 photograph of an Ainu hunter in Hokkaido has absolutely no outward appearance that suggests a person of Mongoloid heritage.⁵ However, recent DNA research has left little doubt that the Ainu are the direct descendants of the Jōmon people, the original people of Japan⁶ (Horai, et al 1996; Nihon Hōsō Kyokai [NHK] 1998).

The original territory of the Ainu, a maritime culture, was huge, including southern Sakhalin, the Kurile islands, Hokkaido (formally Ezo-gashima), and at least the Tōhoku region of the Japanese main island of Honshu. The chaotic development of the modern state of Japan took several centuries to coalesce and expand. An important part of the expansion involved Japanese traders who began to view the resource-rich Ainu lands of Hokkaido as having significant economic potential as a trading venue, and began to establish small seaside communities to support trading activities. However, Japanese interest in Hokkaido gradually grew beyond trade, and began military expeditions after a Japanese blacksmith killed an Ainu in a dispute over a blunt knife in 1456 (Siddle 1996: 31). After years of poor treatment by the Japanese traders, this incident became the catalyst for action. In just a few short months, the Ainu destroyed all but two of the Japanese settlements. While the Ainu were victorious in these early battles, ongoing regional differences between some Ainu groups led to infighting over trade issues, such as control of fisheries and fur bearing animals, which weakened their position of maintaining control as the region’s main trading brokers. Trade and other issues led to intermittent warfare against the Japanese until 1669 when a “large-scale ethnic revolt” broke out (Walker 2001: 50). Under the guise of peace negotiations, the Ainu military leader Shakushain and other allied leaders were assassinated by Japanese samurai from the Matsumae fiefdom who had political control over Hokkaido. While this treachery was a blow to the efforts to save their homeland,⁷ sporadic fighting continued until 1789, when the Ainu fought, and lost, their last military action.

While passive resistance by the Ainu continued, organized military action was over, and in time, Hokkaido became an occupied territory.⁸ More than an economic interest, control of Hokkaido was also important to the Japanese as it acted as a strategic buffer between Honshū, the main island of Japan, and Russia, whose leaders began to expand the eastern



FIGURE 1: Ainu Hunter in Mountain Clothes, 1871. Courtesy National Park Service, Longfellow National Historical Site, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Photographer unknown.

. . . their (the Ainu) religion, a complex form of animism, forbade the reproduction in any form of any living thing, animal or vegetable, or any natural phenomenon such as wind, rain, or snow. They believed evil gods, *wen kamuy*, would enter the depiction and cause great harm.



Detail from the image on the cover and page 16.

limits of their empire by developing a fur trade in the Ainu-held Kurile Islands. The harsh treatment of Russians prompted the Ainu to military action, and like their efforts on Hokkaido, they were successful at first, but soon lost control of the entire Kurile Island chain, and later, Sakhalin. The Japanese presence in Hokkaido continued to grow until the Meiji Restoration in 1868, when the emerging modern Japanese state issued an order establishing the Ainu homeland as a Japanese colony (Siddle 1996: 53). The Ainu lost their independence, and many of their cultural practices were banned, such as the tattooing of female women and children, the burning of the home of a deceased person, the wearing of clothes made from animal skins, and the wearing of earrings by men. The government soon encouraged Japanese citizens throughout Japan to colonize land formerly owned by the Ainu.

The military and political details of the defeat of the Ainu and the loss of their lands are well documented (Siddle 1996; Walker 2001), but what of the traditional⁹ lifestyle of the Ainu? What do we know about their culture? What did they leave behind? The answer is precious little.

Researching any traditional indigenous culture is always a challenge. Of the thousands of pre-contact northern indigenous groups, none is known to have a written language, but they have left other clues. There is almost always a great range of art and artifacts such as pictographs or petroglyphs, pottery, or ivory and metal jewelry, something to give us an insight into the early culture. More than objects of curiosity, these bits and pieces of prehistory often give clues to cultural practices such as dance, fashion, ceremonies, and warfare.

Not so with the Ainu. While there are many objects of material culture in museums around the world,¹⁰ they tell us little of the day-to-day life of the Ainu. For example, their religion, a complex form of animism, forbade the reproduction in any form of any living thing, animal or vegetable, or any natural phenomenon such as wind, rain, or snow. They believed evil gods, *wen kamuy*, would enter the depiction and cause great harm. While there was one exception to the rule—representative art could adorn ceremonial objects such as the *ikupasuy*, the sacred prayer-stick—it shed little light on the traditional lifestyle.¹¹

Conquering armies rarely depict their defeated enemy objectively. In the case of the Ainu it was the Japanese artist, who, in spite of the expected cultural misconceptions caused by prejudice, lack of information, and lack of language skills, preserved much of what we know of the traditional Ainu way of life through the little-known genre paintings called *Ainu-e*.¹² Without these paintings, both dramatic and commonplace ethnographic detail would be lost (Sasaki, T. 1999: 79–85). Unlike artists Paul Kane, Karl Bodmer, and George Catlin, who spent only a very short time painting the North American Indian, the total body of work of many Japanese artists over more than a 150-year period has left a treasure trove of hundreds of paintings covering every element of Ainu life. This extensive coverage is educationally useful for several reasons. For example, different artists see different things, allowing the contemporary researcher/educator to have an unprecedented view of cultural subtlety and nuance. For example, we see views of family life, including children at play, parental instruction, and parents helping each other. The paintings also give us a sense of discovery when viewing Ainu traditional objects of curiosity found in museums around the world. With knowledge gleaned from the paintings, we do not have to ask “What is that object, how was it used?” Other important educational benefits include an artistic record of gradual evolution of the Ainu maritime culture as it adapted foreign influences from trading contacts with not only Japan, but with Russia, China, Korea, and other indigenous peoples as far away as the Northwest Coast of North America.

Given the incredible number of *Ainu-e* paintings, their synergistic value takes on a much deeper meaning than the axiom “a picture is worth a thousand words.” In fact, many *Ainu-e* do have text. However, the text can be somewhat challenging to those instructors new to the Japanese language as the old cursive writing style called *sousho* is usually used. Recognizing that this could be a problem, all references for this article are in English, providing an understanding of the unusual educational material that illustrates Japan’s traditional indigenous culture. Simply put, as cultural depictions of the Ainu, these paintings have no equal, and have helped to keep a culture alive.

Finally, the importance of *Ainu-e* paintings as an educational resource goes far beyond the knowledge of the traditional culture of the Ainu. The political and economic importance of Hokkaido to the Japanese empire cannot be overstated, and any history of Japan that does not include this important chapter of Japan’s emergence as a world power is incomplete.



IN THE BEGINNING (Figure 2)

A goddess from god's land was lost at sea, meandering about for several days before being pushed by wind to an island. Lonely, without food or protection from the elements, she took shelter in a cave. One day a dog appeared and they played. Each day he brought food from the sea and from the mountains. Sensing this was no ordinary dog, they soon became friends. Looking out from the cave one day, she saw the dog coming to visit, only this time he was carrying a flower. Accepting the flower, the goddess invited the dog to move into the cave, and a relationship began. After a period of time the first Ainu child was born.

Clearly a transformation myth, just one of several origin legends, this is the most well-known among the Japanese.¹³ Not understanding transformation mythology, and believing that the bestiality aspect was morally offensive, Japanese, especially children, taunted Ainu children calling them hairy dogs. These insults continue today (Ogihara 1999b: 274–7).

CHILDHOOD GAMES FOR BOYS (Figure 3)

Ainu children, like children throughout the world, spent much of their time at play. While games were fun, there was a serious side to all childhood recreation. As the children grew older, the play grew more gender specific. Boys, the next generation of hunters, played games that developed strength and agility, such as the pole vaulting seen in this painting. Hokkaido had many small streams that had to be crossed in the pursuit of wild food resources, and the ability to vault over partially-frozen streams was important for survival. Other games included throwing a "spear" at a hoop rolling along the ground, trying to hit the center of the hoop. The Ainu's main animal food source was the salmon, and spearing was an extremely important skill. Bow and arrow competitions were also popular and important. A favorite was shooting a target swinging from a tree. The hunting skills a young man was able to demonstrate successfully were main ingredients in attracting a good mate (Muraki 1999: 246–7).



FIGURE 2: Goddess of the Cave from Shimanojo Murakami's *Ezo-shima Kikan (Curious Sights of Ezo Island)* (1799). Courtesy National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. Photo: Dana Levy.

FIGURE 3: Pole vaulting, from *Ezo Kikou (Drawings of Travels Through Ezo)* by Gentan Tani (1799). Courtesy Hakodate Municipal Library. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.



FIGURE 4: Ainu girls drawing design patterns in the sand from Shimanojo Murakami's *Ezo-shima Kikan* (*Curious Sights of Ezo Island*) (1799). Courtesy Hakodate Municipal Library. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.

CHILDHOOD GAMES FOR GIRLS (Figure 4)

Young girls learned the role of wife and mother through the use of toys such as mortar and pestles and winnowers, and helping their mothers and grandmothers who made food preparation a game. Food gathering was often done in small groups of women friends and their daughters, making the activity fun. However, while the learning of household chores was important, it was the mastery of the art of garment making, especially the creation of important traditional designs, that a woman would be judged for the rest of her life. It was a critical cultural expectation that each woman develop her own repertoire, as it was unacceptable to

make the same design twice. Learning the basics as a young girl, often drawing in the sand, was the equivalent of going to college to learn abstract art design. While the accolades a creative young woman would receive were most satisfying, it was the knowledge that her creativity was pleasing the gods that was most important (Muraki 1999: 246–7; Dubreuil 1999a: 287–300; Kodama 1999: 313–26).

FROM ELM BARK FIBER TO FASHION FABRIC (Figure 5)

The fabric arts of the Ainu are great gifts to the world. Here we see an Ainu husband pulling elm bark for his wife. After discarding the rough outer bark, the remainder is put into a stream until each very thin layer of the dermis separates. The long layers are carefully dried, split into 'threads' that are then woven, using a back strap loom, into bolts of a beautiful golden colored 'cloth' called *attush*. Extremely labor intensive, the cloth is exceptionally durable. Undecorated it was a work garment, and often traded to the Japanese who used it for the same purpose. Decorated, the garments were for ceremonial use, and considered wearable art. Unfortunately, because discrimination was so pervasive, most traditional knowledge was lost. Today, based in part on information from *Ainu-e*, there is a cultural revival in all the arts and crafts, and making the *attush* garment is one of the most highly-prized skills (Dubreuil 1999a: 287–300; Kodama 1999: 313–26).



FIGURE 5: Stripping tree bark from Shimanojo Murakami's *Ezo-shima Kikan* (*Curious Sights of Ezo Island*) (1799). Courtesy Hakodate Municipal Library. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.

THE FRUITS OF MARITIME TRADE (Figure 6)

While the trees of Hokkaido are not as huge as those found on the Northwest Coast of North America, they were big, and using a 'lap-streak' construction method of attaching split boards to the sides of the *itaomachip*, the large dugout canoes, they were able to create a boat capable of sailing the ocean, allowing the Ainu to become successful trading brokers.

Here we see an Ainu elder wearing a Chinese *santan* silk robe, imported from Ching-dynasty China by Ainu traders from Sakhalin Island. While these robes are often found in Ainu-e, they were not as common as pictorial frequency might indicate. Silk was very expensive, with remnants from any silk object cut into narrow strips and applied on attush or other garments for decoration. Even a limited use of silk was an indicator of wealth, giving the owner not only a sense of pride, but a belief that a beautiful garment pleased the gods.

Other trade goods included sable, fox, badger, and especially sea otter fur, iron-ware and tools, hawk and eagle feathers, and fish products (Sasaki S. 1999: 86–91).

HARVESTING SALMON (Figure 7)

Salmon were as important to the Ainu as buffalo were to the Plains Indians. Because of the enormously large salmon runs in every stream and river in Hokkaido, it was the most important accessible food source, and, like buffalo hides, salmon skin was used to make robes, boots, and other objects. There was also an important

spiritual element to the salmon. Because of the importance of the food source, great respect was given to the salmon god, *kamuy-chep*, which included the First Salmon ceremony, which gave thanks to *kamuy-chep* for the bounty. While the indigenous people of the Northwest coast of North America also have a First Salmon ceremony, the Ainu three-part ceremony is more complex (Dubreuil 2002: 4–17).

Salmon were taken with weirs and nets in rivers, by spearing from smaller dugout canoes, and as shown in figure 7, at night using birch bark torches. The fish spear, the *marek*, different from that used by any other group in the North, has a pivoting hook that prevented the salmon from wiggling off. While some of the fish was eaten raw or freshly cooked by boiling or grilling, the overwhelming majority was smoked or air dried. The extremely cold winters and deep snow made hunting and fishing all but impossible. Winters came early and stayed late. Without a large cache of preserved food, starvation was inevitable. Mammals, mostly deer and some bear, were also harvested, but they were mainly used to supplement the more important wild vegetables (Ölschleger 1999: 208–21).



FIGURE 7: Spearing salmon from Ezo Fuzoku *Juni-ka-getsu* (*Twelve Months of Ainu Manners and Customs*), after 1872. Courtesy Historical Museum of Hokkaido. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.



FIGURE 6: An Ainu elder man in full dress by Teiryō Kodama (mid-eighteenth century). Courtesy The Ainu Museum, Kodama Collection. Photo: The Ainu Museum.



FIGURE 8: Gathering Maple Syrup from Ainu Fuzoku Emaki (Picture Scroll of Ainu Manners and Customs) by Hokuyo Nishikawa (late nineteenth century). Courtesy Hakodate Municipal Library. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.

A SWEET SAUCE (Figure 8)

The diet of the AINU was more varied than one would think. They, like every indigenous people, were completely in tune with their environment. They knew every edible root, leaf, flower, or fruit and when to pick it. However, spring provided a special treat. Hokkaido had huge sugar maple forests from which the AINU harvested the tree sap. The sap, used to make sweet soups and stews, marked the end of a very cold and snowy winter, and the beginning of the bounty that spring, summer, and fall offered.

The change of seasons also brought a wide variety of foods that included wild garlic, cow parsnip, skunk cabbage, wild grains such as foxtail millet, and seaweed. After preparation, lily roots were especially important as they could be kept by the hearth and eaten all year long. Rice, difficult to grow in Hokkaido's short growing season, was a trade item from Japan (Kohara 1999: 202–7).

THE GOD OF THE MOUNTAIN, AND THE GIFT OF SELF (Figure 9)

The traditional religion of the AINU is animism, a belief that literally everything has a god spirit, including human-made household objects such as wooden bowls and spatulas. One of the main tenets is the *iyomante*, the spirit-sending ceremony. The AINU believe that god spirits leave god's land to journey to the *Ainu mosir*, AINU homeland, disguised as bears, owls, trees, food plants, etc. The purpose of the visit for a bear was to bring the AINU the gift of its fur and meat. More importantly the visit was to determine the behavior of the AINU. If they were respectful to the gods and each other, the gods would continue to send the people the good life in the form of good harvests, good weather, and good health.

The most important of the sending ceremonies is the bear ceremony. A young cub is caught and raised by the family matriarch as part of the extended family. Usually in the bear's third winter, it is time to send its spirit back to *kamuy mosir*, god's land. Friends and relatives are invited from other villages to share in the event. As seen in this painting, the bear is struck with many non-lethal ceremonial 'flower' arrows as a means of exciting the bear to prepare for its journey. Eventually the bear is ritually killed by suffocation, and its spirit is sent back to god's land. This is a joyous time for both the people and the bear. The ceremony is thought by some as a sacrifice to god. It is not! The bear IS a god (Fujimura 1999: 193–7; Akino 1999: 248–55; Utagawa 1999: 256–60).

There is one important error in this painting. In the lower right corner a woman is holding a bow, implying that women participate in this part of the ceremony. They do not. The women sing and dance around the site helping to prepare for the journey. I can say unequivocally that the ceremony is still held today, but because of opposition by the Japanese government and animal rights groups who do not understand its purpose, the ceremony is held in secret.¹⁴

FIGURE 9: *Iyomante*, the Bear-sending Ceremony from Shimanojo Murakami's *Ezo-shima Kikan* (Curious Sights of Ezo Island) (1799). Courtesy National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. Photo: Dana Levy.



TYRANNICAL ACTS: RESULTS OF PARADISE LOST (Figure 10)

As the Ainu lost the wars with Japan, they lost their freedom and way of life. While their traditional life in Hokkaido, *Ainu mosir*, the Ainu homeland, had its challenges, it was thought to be the garden of the gods. Even with its harsh winters, Hokkaido and the surrounding waters provided a wide variety of foods to satisfy the most discriminating palate, and with care and respect for the gods, food was plentiful.

However, Japan, as the conquering state, believed that it was natural for the victorious to dominate the 'inferior other' in any manner that profited the victor. In addition to the loss of land and many of their cultural activities, the greatest blow was the outlawing of the harvesting of fish, resulting in the death of a great many Ainu by starvation. The Japanese, in what they thought was a magnanimous gesture, gave the Ainu small parcels of land in which to grow the foods to sustain life. Unfortunately, most of the land was untillable.

In time, schools for Ainu children were established, but because of the belief that the Ainu were intellectually inferior, the schools were not of the same caliber as Japanese schools, insuring that the Ainu would not be able to compete in the job market. Tyranny had many faces (Siddle 1996: 125–6).

BENT BUT NOT BROKEN (Figure 11)

The years of Japanese oppression were difficult years for the traditional Ainu way of life, and continue to be for the contemporary Ainu. However, unlike hundreds of other indigenous cultures that have disappeared, the Ainu culture has maintained vigor through traditional and contemporary art (Dubreuil 1999a: 287–301; 1999b: 335–55; 2003: 90–1), music and dance, which have been designated "intangible important folk cultural properties" (Tanimoto 1999: 282–5), and belief in their gods. Even with discrimination as a part of everyday life, there is a joy and pride in being who they are. While the traditional days are gone, it is ironic that artists of the victorious have done so much to allow the contemporary Ainu to maintain a vital link to the past.



FIGURE 10: Audience with a lord at Matsumae Castle from Shimanojo Murakami's *Ezo-shima Kikan* (*Curious Sights of Ezo Island*) (1799). Courtesy Hakodate Municipal Library. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.

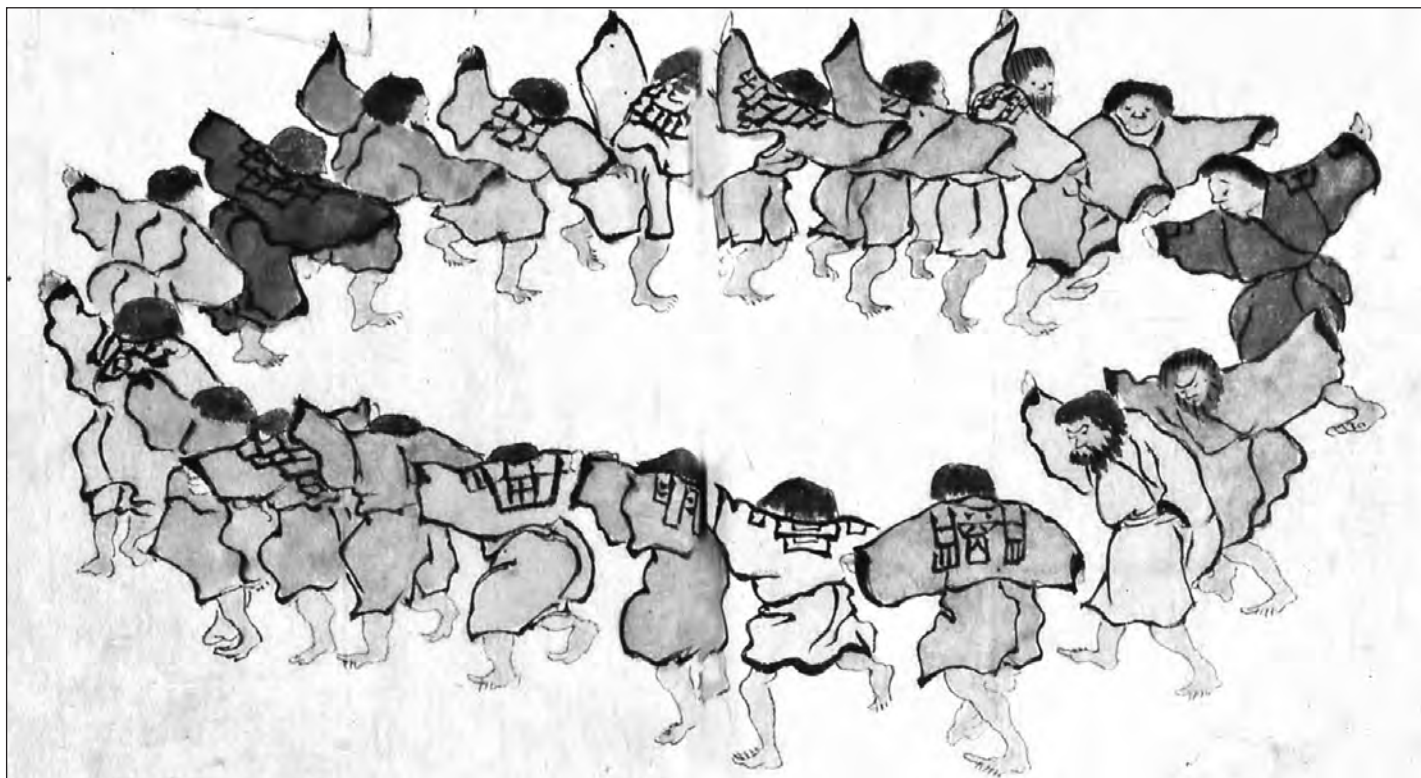


FIGURE 11: Crane Dance from *Ezo Kikou* (*Drawings of Travels Through Ezo*) by Gentan Tani (1799). Courtesy Hakodate Municipal Library. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.



AN AINU CHIEFTAIN (Figure 12)

This 1843 copy by Teiki Kojima of the chieftain from the Ainu village of Heshikai Poloya is one of twelve Ainu chieftain portraits painted circa 1790 by Hakyo Kakizaki, a member of the Matsumae family. On the surface, this appears to be a wonderful example of an Ainu man in the late 1700s wearing a beautiful attush robe, but all twelve chieftains, in varying poses and dress, exhibit a negative image. For example, the depiction of the eyes with the iris pointed upward is called *sanpakugan* and implies ill fortune. Considering that all twelve chieftains have sanpakugan eyes, the artist was making a clear statement about the savage or demented ‘otherness’ of the Ainu. The fact that the man is dragging the dog is also an unfavorable image. Richard Siddle writes of the paintings, “Both barbarity and strength are emphasized, implicitly glorifying the Matsumae who had subjugated these powerful leaders” (1996: 49). Regardless of subtle or overt examples of discrimination found in Ainu-e, we still have much to learn from them. ■

FIGURE 12: Chieftain of Heshikai, Poloya, copied by Teiki Kojima (1843) from Ishu Retsuzo (*Portraits of Ezo Chieftains*) by Hakyo Kakizaki (circa 1790). Courtesy of the Yoshikazu and Michi Kitao collection. Photo: Susumu Tameoka.

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NOTES

1. In this case, "Other People" refers to people of an ethnic minority that has traditionally been denied economic or political power (Atkins, R. 1997: 138).
2. The readers who go beyond this article for further research will find multiple spellings for most key words in this article, including Ainu, Hokkaido, and Kurile Islands. Readers should also note that family names of Japanese appear as in the West, last.
3. There are two other minority groups in Japan, the original Ryukyuan people of Okinawa, and the *Burakumin*, the so-called outcasts of Japan. The Ryukyuan continue to fight for recognition. The significant Korean presence in Japan is not within the scope of this article.
4. I strongly recommend the book, *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by Fitzhugh and Dubreuil, for teachers. Written by over fifty Ainu scholars from every field of study, the book has 415 pages and 595 illustrations (320 in color), and is the most comprehensive and economical instructional aid for the study of the Ainu.
5. Because of intermarriage with the Japanese, many mixed-blood contemporary Ainu do not have all the physical traits of the 'typical' Ainu of the 1800s. However, other Ainu who have the physical features described are subjected to great discrimination.
6. It has long been believed that the modern Japanese descended from the Jōmon. However, their DNA has been shown to be a hybrid mix of Korean, Chinese, Ainu, and Ryukyuan. Horai et al. found that "Although the mainland Japanese shared some degree of genetic affinity with the Ainu and Ryukyuan, who are considered modern descendants of the aboriginal Jōmon people, a great majority of the gene pool in the mainland Japanese was derived from the Asian continent . . . supporting the hybridization theory on the origin of modern Japanese" (1996: 587–8).
7. There has been debate whether Hokkaido should be considered an "Ainu homeland" because of a lack of cohesiveness of competing Ainu groups. While the

Ainu homeland could not be considered a unified 'nation state,' contemporary Ainu firmly believe that Hokkaido is their homeland, and Ainu scholars such as Brett Walker seem to agree. He describes the Shakushain war as "the last attempt by anything resembling a pan-Ainu alliance to expel [the Japanese] militarily from the [Ainu] homeland" (Walker 2001: 49).

8. Because of several factors, including limited Japanese military resources and Hokkaido's rugged mountainous terrain with no roads or communications, Japan did not occupy all of Hokkaido for many years.
9. The term "traditional" has many meanings. In this article it refers to the period when the Ainu had freedom to choose their own cultural norms (Barfield 1997: 470–1). For example, as maritime trading brokers, the Ainu came in contact with many items appealing to their culture. A vibrant traditional culture that can freely accept 'foreign' material influences and make them their own is a strong sign of a healthy culture. Any culture that does not make new traditions as times change will most certainly have difficulties surviving.
10. With few exceptions the oldest material was collected by Europeans and Americans. Japan did not start collecting objects of Ainu material culture until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Kreiner 1999: 125–31; Ogihara 1999a: 132–5; Kotani 1999: 136–47; Houchins 1999: 148–54; Poster 1999: 155–61; Katz 1999: 162–7; Kendall 1999: 168–75; Aoyagi and Deriha 1999: 176–82).
11. While the religion was a multiplicity of rules that gave direction to Ainu life, if the gods presented the Ainu with a problem that the people had no control over, such as the terrible treatment by the Japanese, the religion did provide an interesting opportunity for redress: they could argue with the gods for a change of dogma (Fujimura 1999: 193–7). As an example of a possible scenario for this unusual grievance procedure, after the Meiji Restoration the Japanese made the harvesting of fish by the Ainu against the law, and starvation became a major cause of death. The Ainu prayed and asked the gods to reconsider the taboo against artistic imagery. In time there was an 'awareness' that the Ainu could artistically replicate images of the bear, the god of the mountain, and other earthly forms of the spirits found in god's land. This allowed the Ainu to compete in the tourist market for a source of income. While there is no evidence that this occurred, it fits the model. In my opinion, the ban was too important to both the gods and the Ainu that the change of dogma could have happened without divine intervention.
12. While there may be earlier examples, the earliest documented Ainu-e dated to 1720 and works continued to be produced until the late nineteenth century. However, much of the early work was by artists who had never been to Hokkaido, relying on information provided by informants who had visited there. As Hokkaido became more important, the Japanese government sent artists to record the customs and manners of Ainu, with the first book, *Curious Sights of Ezo (Hokkaido) Land* [Shimanojo Murakami] thought to have been published in 1799. These genre paintings have never enjoyed the popularity of *ukiyo-e*, and are rarely a subject of academic pursuit among most Japanese art historians in the West, or in Japan. However, some Japanese museums with large collections of *ukiyo-e* have recently broadened the definition of *ukiyo-e* to include Ainu-e (Nagata, ed. 1996, vol. 1).
13. Because the Ainu did not have a written language, it must be pointed out that all early information on the Ainu was written by Japanese or foreigners. Given the discriminatory feelings of the Japanese toward the Ainu, it is impossible to ascertain the validity of all information.
14. Many ceremonies have been lost due to pressure by the Japanese government. However, the bear *iyomante*, or bear-spirit-sending ceremony, survives fairly intact. In an interesting turn of events, the government, in an attempt to promote the tourist trade to Hokkaido in the early twentieth century, reversed their ban on the *iyomante*, and pressured the Ainu to perform the *iyomante* for the public, thereby preserving both nuance and mechanics of the ritual. However, the public displays also enforced the belief that the Ainu were barbarians (Siddle 1996: 106).

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